

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

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O 121305Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5352

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 5465

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E.O. 11652 XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR MASS JO US

SUBJECT: KING'S STATEMENTS ON HAWKS

REF (A) AMMAN 5438 (B) AMMAN 5462 (C) STATE 189226

1. SUMMARY: RIFAI SOUGHT ME OUT BEFORE DINNER FOR MEXICAN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA EVENING OF AUG 10 AND WE HAD AN EXTENDED PRIVATE CONVERSATION ON PRESENT STATE OF PLAY. HE AGREES ON KEEPING QUIET FOR NOW. WE ALSO DISCUSSED TACTICS AND FUTURE OPTIONS ON THE HAWK SALE. END SUMMARY.

2. HE MENTIONED THAT HE WOULD BE ASKING FOR OUR HELP IN CONNECTION WITH A BORDER DEFENSE PROBLEM THEY HAD WITH THE ISRAELIS SOUTH OF THE DEAD SEA. (THIS HAS BEEN REPORTED SEVERAL TIMES IN THE PAST. SEPTTEL REPORTS DETAILS).

3. I THEN TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL HIM IN SHORTER FORM WHAT I HAD TOLD THE KING ABOUT THE NEED FOR A QUIET PERIOD. RIFAI SAID HE AGREED WITH THIS APPROACH AND FELT WE WERE RIGHT. HE NOTED THAT KING PLANS TO SEE NO ONE AND HE (RIFAI) WILL COOPERATE IN KEEPING STATEMENTS OUT OF THE PRESS.

4. RIFAI NOTED THAT PART OF THEIR EXTREME COMMENTS ABOUT GOING TO SOVIETS PREDICATED ON THEIR OWN IMPRESSIONS THAT THERE IS GREAT DISBELIEF IN CONGRESS

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(THEY HAVE BEEN READING TESTIMONY) THAT KING WOULD GO

TO SOVIETS. THEY ARE IRKED AND STIRRED BY THAT KIND OF APPROACH AND IT WAS THAT SORT OF TAKE JORDAN FOR GRANTED ATTITUDE THAT MADE THEM REACT SO VEHEMENTLY.

5. IN ADDITION RIFAI TOLD ME THAT THEY STILL HAVE GREAT FAITH IN OUR ABILITY TO PULL THE SALE THROUGH FOR THEM. THEY ABSOLUTELY DO NOT WANT TO GO TO THE SOVIETS. WE SHOULD BE SURE ON THAT POINT. IF THEY WERE ANY LESS SURE THAT WE COULD NOT PULL IT OFF THEY WOULD HAVE BEEN LESS CATEGORICALLY ABOUT THE SOVIET OPTION. I TOLD RIFIA THAT IT WAS MOST IMPORTANT NOT TO BE SEEN TO BE THREATENING THE CONGRESS OR HANDING IT AN ULTIMATUM. ALSO I THOUGHT THAT THEY HAD NOW MADE THEIR OWN POINT OF VIEW CRYSTAL CLEAR AND HAD PUT THEMSELVES IN A PUBLIC POSITION WHERE IT WOULD BE BETTER TO LET THINGS COOL OFF FOR A WHILE OR THEY MIGHT VERY SHORTLY HAVE TROUBLE KEEPING ALL OF THEIR US OPTIONS OPEN.

6. HE PRESSED ABOUT WHAT WE COULD DO IF THE PRESENT EFFORT FAILED. I SAID THAT WE WERE NOT WITHOUT OPTIONS. FIRST WE HAD THE HOPE THAT THE SECRETARY OUTLINED THAT THE CHANGE IN CLIMATE ON NEGOTIATIONS AND ISRAELI AID MIGHT CHANGE THE ATMOSPHERE ENOUGH TO KEEP THE SALE FROM BEING BLOCKED. BEYOND THAT IF THAT WERE NOT ENOUGH THEN WE MIGHT HAVE TO LOOK AT WHAT ELSE COULD BE DONE. SOME FACE SAVING FOR THE CONGRESS BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH FOR EXAMPLE MIGHT BE REQUIRED TO PUSH IT OVER THE TOP. THIS COULD BE CONSULTATION OR SOMETHING ELSE BUT IT IS TOO SOON TO KNOW WHAT IS REQUIRED.

7. I ADDED THAT WERE ALSO FURTHER OPTIONS. HE THEN SAID "YES A COMMERCIAL SALE" HE THEN ASKED WHY WE HAD NOT DONE THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE. I REPLIED THAT THERE WERE TWO REASONS. (A) WE DID NOT HAVE ANY REAL REASON TO EXPECT THIS KIND OF TROUBLE FROM CONGRESS LAST FEBRUARY AND MARCH WHEN WE DETERMINED THIS METHOD (FMS CASH) OF SALE AND (B) THE GOJ HAD ALWAYS PREFERRED TO USE FMS OVER COMMERICAL BECAUSE OUR DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ENSURE THE QUALITY AND THE AGENTS COMMISSION PROBLEM IS TAKEN CARE OF. THERE IS A THIRD REASON NOW. WE CANNOT BE SURE IF

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THE CONGRESS FRUSTRATES THE FMS SALE THEY WOULD NOT TRY ALSO TO DO SO WITH A COMMERICAL SALE. BUT THAT DEPEND ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES AT THE TIME. WHETHER THE PRESIDENT COULD VETO THEIR ACTION OR WHETHER THEY COULD ACCEPT IT IN THIS FORM AS AN EXECUTIVE ACTION THEY WOULD CRITICIZE BUT TACITLY AGREE TO LET GO THROUGH. THESE WERE ALL POSSIBILITIES AND WE SHOULD KEEP THEM OPEN. BUT NOW WAS NOT TIME TO SHIFT OUR GROUND ON THE FMS CASE OR TO GIVE TOO

MUCH ATTENTION TO ALTERNATIVES WHICH MIGHT LEAK AND HEARTEN THE OPPOSITION INTO BELIEVING WE WERE MOVING AWAY FROM OUR POSITION. OBVIOUSLY THERE MIGHT BE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH WE WOULD WANT TO COME BACK TO THEM WITH IDEAS.

8. FINALLY AS KING HAD MENTIONED TO ME, THERE WERE POSSIBILITIES OF ANOTHER WEAPONS SYSTEM. THE ROLAND OF RAPIER POSSIBLY IN COMBINATION WITH SOMETHING WE COULD PROVIDE MIGHT HELP TO WORK OUT THE PROBLEM FOR THEM AND TO KEEP THE SOVIETS OUT.

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9. RIFAI'S REACTION TO THIS WAS ONE OF POSITIVE INTEREST. IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT THEY EXPECTED ME TO HAVE COME BACK FROM WASHINGTON WITH SOME KIND OF HARD SELL ON A COMPROMISE. THIS POSSIBILITY I BELIEVE HAS PEAKED THEIR INTEREST, BUT FROM HERE THE BEST POSTURE WOULD SEEM TO BE NOT TO TRY TO SELL THEM NOW ON ANY CHANGE IN THE PRESENT APPROACH. HOWEVER WE CAN DO A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WORK HELPING THEM TO ADJUST TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE. RIFAI WANTS TO KNOW WHETHER THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES AND I AM SURE HE REALIZES THE RIGIDITY OF THEIR OWN STAND HAS HELPED TO KILL OFF SOME OF THE POSSIBILITIES FOR COMPROMISE. IN THE LONG RUN I BELIEVE PROVIDED WE NEED A COMPROMISE IF WE CAN PROVIDE A RATIONALE THAT ALLOWS JORDANAINS TO SAY THEY HAVE GOTTEN ALL OR MOST OF WHAT THEY WANT THEN A COMPROMISE MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE OF SELLING.

10. IN THIS CONNECTION IT MIGHT ALSO BE WORTHWHILE

LOOKING AT THE MILITARY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE
FOR JORDAN OF SOME QUALITY OF HAWKS LESS THAN THE
PRESENT NUMBER I.E. FEWER BATTERIES, OR FEWER LAUNCHERS
PER BATTERY COUPLED WITH A FIRST LINE SHORTER RANGE SYSTEM
SUCH AS ROLAND FOR OUT YEAR DELIVERY WHICH WOULD ALSO
PROVIDE MORE EFFECTIVE CLOSE IN PROTECTION OF AIRFIELDS
AND RADARS? THUS AN ARRANGEMENT WITH SOMEWHAT FEWER
HAWKS, BUT LARGER NUMBER OF ROLANDS MIGHT BE TONE WITH A
BETTER MILITARY BALANCE AND STILL BE ACCEPTABLE HERE.
WE COULD ALSO TAKE CREDIT IF SUCH IS POSSIBLE. FOR AN
EARLIER THAN NORMAL DELIVERY TIME FOR ROLANDS FROM
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FRENCH OR ALTERNATIVELY FOR DELIVERY FROM WHAT WE UNDERSTAND
WILL BE FUTURE US PRODUCTION.

11. RIFAI ALSO TOLD ME THAT HE AND KING ARE DRAFTING
A BATCH OF LETTERS TO ALL US SENATORS AND TO CONGRESSMEN
ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE AND RULES COMMITTEE.
LEADERSHIP WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED. THANK YOU NOTES FOR
SUPPORT WILL GO TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HELPFUL. AMBASSADOR
DALAH WHO IS HERE WILL HAND CARRY THEM BACK WITH HIM LATER
THIS MONTH SO THEY CAN BE DELIVERED WHEN CONGRESS RETURNS.
RIFAI SAID HIS ORIGINAL DRAFT WAS SHORT COVERED REASONS
WHY JORDAN NEEDED THE EQUIPMENT REAFFIRMED JORDAN'S
NON AGGRESSIVE PEACEFUL AND MODERATE POLICIES IN THE
AREA AND THEN POINTED TO SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF
THE FAILURE OF THE SALE TO GO THROUGH. (HERE I TOLD
RIFAI WE SHOULD GUARD AGAINST OVER WORKING THE SYRIA
AND SOVIET THREAT ANGLES TOO MUCH AND HE AGREED). KING
HAD BEEN REDRAFTING THE LETTERS INTO 12 PAGE DOCUMENTS
ON THE HISTORY OF THE WHOLE PROBLEM. I TOLD RIFAI I HAD
BEEN ASKED BY KING FOR MY ADVICE ON THE ISSUE AND HAD
SAID PERSONALLY I THOUGHT LETTERS SHOULD FOCUS ON QUESTION
AT HAND (HAWK SALE) AND THAT TONE AND APPROACH WERE AS
IMPORTANT AS SUBSTANCE. LETTERS SHOULD BE MODERATE
LOGICAL REASONED AND IN KEEPING WITH KINGS PAST
DISCUSSIONS WITH CONGRESS. RIFAI SAID HE AGREED AND HAD
ALREADY WHITTLED THE EFFORT DOWN TO FIVE PAGES AND WOULD
TRY FOR MORE. I TOLD HIM IT WOULD BE HARD TO GET BUSY
SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN TO READ ANYTHING TOO LONG.
PICKERING

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